Sleep

Information for parents and carers

Did you know?

The Sleep Council highlights how quality sleep is essential for growth and development and that your child needs between 8-10 hours sleep every night. Teen's body clocks naturally shift to make them feel tired later in the evening, but early school starts do not enable them to sleep in the mornings. Chronic sleep deprivation can have a huge effect on a teenager's life and mental wellbeing.

Further research shows that there is a link between getting enough sleep, sleep awareness and student performance. Numerous studies have shown that not getting enough sleep can negatively affect school performance and impair cognitive function.

Teens need more sleep than adults. Research shows that the brain's ability to process information declines with lack of sleep. Our emotional responses, empathy towards others and tendency to do silly things all goes up with lack of sleep. Long term sleep deprivation can suppress the immune system, lead to forms of cancer, heart disease and metabolic abnormalities.

What can you do?
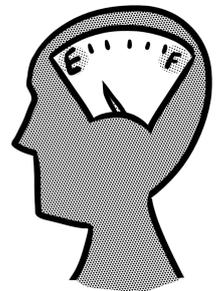
Help your child establish a good sleep routine. Encourage them to limit screen time before bed and to read a book or magazine instead. Get them to keep a sleep diary over a two-week period to see how much sleep they are getting and how they can improve it. Have a conversation with your child about their sleep.

Eating late at night is not good for digestion or aiding a better night's sleep. Make sure your child avoids sugary and heavy foods late at night and doesn't drink caffeine or energy drinks from lunchtime onwards. Healthy habits such as warm milk or camomile tea, daily exercise, relaxing in the evening and having a calming bedroom environment, can all help your child get a better night's sleep.

Try to get your child to go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning – even on a weekend. A consistent sleep-wake cycle is really important for them to function well. Know the signs of sleep deprivation and work with your child to find a routine that works for them.

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